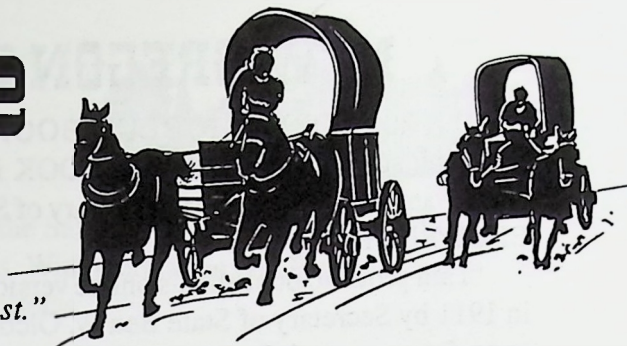


The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the

Talent Historical Society

"Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past."



206 East Main, Suite C • P.O. Box 582 • Talent, Oregon 97540 • 541/512-8838

June 2003

NEW FORT WAGNER PLAQUE DEDICATED

The City of Talent dedicated a commemorative bronze plaque at the site of Fort Wagner on Thursday, May 22, 2003 at 226 Talent Avenue at 12 noon. The Lions Club, represented by Chuck Roberts, Mayor Marian Telerski, Talent Historical Society and City staff reminisced about how the community now known as Talent got started. Fort Wagner was built on the 160 acre Donation Land Claim of Jacob Wagner during the Indian Wars of Southern Oregon. Though there is much debate about the causes of the conflicts with the Native Americans, there is no doubt that the fort forged relationships among the pioneers that might not have happened otherwise. The late Al Grabher researched the site years ago to pinpoint the fort's location. His widow and grand son attended the ceremony to remember his efforts. The Lions Club provided the funds to replace the original plaque, which was stolen about a year ago.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR:

I wrote an editorial piece for the Mail Tribune recently which went unpublished. I include it in this newsletter to let Talent Historical Society members know that action is necessary to save our precious historical resources. Recent county budget cuts to the Southern Historical Society have also deeply effected us. A number of Talent people attended the April 24th budget hearing and learned then that commissioners Walker and Kupillas are suggesting the county-owned buildings in Jacksonville be sold to the highest bidder. Would you like to see the Beekman house in private hands? Would the public be served by selling the Jacksonville Museum to someone from out of state? These are real possibilities unless those who care stand up and say "enough". For what it is worth the following is the editorial that never made it to the newspaper:

The world was saddened by the shameful looting of the museum and the burning of a major library in Iraq. For a moment in time, we could all contemplate how important it is to preserve the past and to have free access to the body of knowledge contained in libraries and museums. And how quickly it can all disappear if not protected. As Americans we believe that such a loss just couldn't happen here. But what difference does it make whether treasures are lost through stealing, looting, bombing, or by slowly chipping away at the funds necessary to acquire, preserve and publicly display our own local treasures? The end result is the same. Once lost they are out of our reach, out of our sight, removed from access and study. By continuing to use the Southern Oregon Historical Society's funds to make up for County general fund budget shortfalls, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners is effectively ravaging our past by undermining our collective ability to store, preserve and present our own history. Surely our commissioners are more enlightened than the far away thieves. Surely they value our rights as citizens to access public knowledge through museums and libraries as did the voters of Jackson County when they voted many years ago to set aside funds specifically for this purpose. Urge our commissioners to preserve SOHS, keep our treasures, and to make knowledge and culture forever accessible. Do it for the citizens and for the interested and for the free.

NEW OREGON BLUE BOOK NOW ONLINE

The 2003 OREGON BLUE BOOK is now available on line at the following URL: <http://bluebook.state.or.us>. The BLUE BOOK is the state's official government directory and encyclopedia of history and fact. This is what Secretary of State Bill Bradley had to say in his introduction to the 2003-2004 BLUE BOOK:

"I am proud to publish this online version of the 2003-2004 Oregon Blue Book. Since its first publication in 1911 by Secretary of State Ben W. Olcott, the Blue Book has been a resource Oregonians could depend upon for accurate information about state history, economy, government and culture. As always, I hope you find this edition of the Blue Book to be an invaluable research tool brimming with information about our beautiful state."

This year the book provides additional tools to help Oregonians understand and access their government and Oregon's cultural resources. It also features a new analysis of the state's economy and governmental finance. Other new features include added state agency histories and provides records retention schedules.

The new book also provides contact information, including Web site addresses and e-mail listings for all levels of government. The extensive Oregon history section provides links to biographical sketches and Web exhibits for those who want to mine our history more deeply. Interestingly enough, one new feature displays Oregon businesses colorful historic trademark labels from the late 1800s and the early 1900s. To check on these trademark labels, put the computer's cursor on Cultural at the top of the home page, and then click on Scenic Images.

Among Jackson County labels is one by Ashland cigar purveyor John J. O'Neil for Lewis and Clark Cigars, circa 1902; Tasty Cereal, Klamath Cereal Company, 1935; Ashland Peaches, Max Pracht, Prop., 1893; Roseburg Creamery Butter, Roseburg Creamery, 1932; Crater Lake Butter, Klamath Falls Creamery, 1934; Gold Seal Beer, and Southern Oregon Brewing Company, 1936. There are scores of labels from other places in the state. One non-local trademark product, available at almost any general store was a California firm called Koke, which guaranteed their product to be "Absolutely Free From Cocaine!"

Some other interesting features of the new BLUE BOOK include images of all members of the new Legislative Assembly as well as related district descriptions and maps; new voter registration maps; the 2002 version of the State Constitution; each Oregon city has its own page; all population figures are updated to 2001; and the on-line version even has a kid's page with links to topics and websites suitable for younger readers. Remember this on-line version does not cost a cent, except to the taxpayers. The print version will be available at local libraries in April 2003.

GETTING MAIL AND SENDING LETTERS WAS NO EASY TASK IN PIONEER TIMES

Editor's note: The following item has been extracted from the autobiography of J. Henry Brown, Oregon pioneer of 1847.

When I came to Oregon, there were no mail facilities whatever. We only received newspapers by the Missionary ships once a year, and letters from friends by emigrants across the plains, and the war with Mexico had been closed some six months before we heard of it. It generally required two years to write and receive a letter and then we paid 50 cents to have the letter carried to the first post office in Missouri by persons returning to the States. When the P. M. S. S. Co. established their line and crossed the Isthmus, we hailed it as one of the remarkable achievements of the day; we were then able to hear from our friends once every three months. The next great step was the overland mail and telegraph, and finally the completion of the continental railroad, the acme probably of human progress, and now if there should be a delay of a few days of a severe blockade, what a howl is set up, conclusively showing the perverseness of human character at a momentary delay. The first U. S. Mail that was ever received in Salem was three days coming from Oregon City on a keel boat, and the day it left that place a gentleman came through on horseback and told the good news, consequently we were all excitement until it arrived.

BRIC-A-BRAC

Featured item from the THS Sales Shoppe.

We have some beautiful Brazilian agate slabs for sale in the Sales Shoppe. Some of the slabs have pewter objects on them and some are candle holders. With graduation and Father's Day coming up, check out our books on history and other gift items.



Congratulations to our new member who won her membership by guessing the number of buttons in the jar. There were 811 buttons and Elizabeth Koester guessed 750. Guesses ranged from 101 to 3,020 and somehow, Elizabeth was able to out-guess them all. We hope you enjoy the newsletter and the many benefits of Talent Historical Society membership.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THS!

If you have from 2-4 hours per week to help out at the Talent Historical Society on any of the following projects please give Jan a call at 512-8838.

1. Keeping track of membership and recruitment of new members and volunteers.
2. Research development, obituary project, Talent notebook of early families—gathering info. from old timers, photography project, etc.
3. Oral history transcribing.
4. Public relations—network for the society and make contacts with the media.
5. Help with special events such as the Harvest Festival in September.
6. Putting up shelves for the Sales Shoppe.
7. Keeping the museum open more hours for the summer.



OVERHEARD

This is excerpted from a taped interview with Joe Cowley. Marian Angele, interviewer.

Joe: This was during Depression time and they were so poor they couldn't afford any indoor plumbing, they couldn't even afford to have a bathtub in their house. And so the husband got out and he carved out a cedar log in the shape of a bathtub and I guess his boys helped him, and they drug it to the house and then they, I think they used a series of wooden troughs and they connected with the spring that was higher up in the hills above the house. Water'd flow down through this trough and into the bathtub. And it was as long as your display case, maybe even longer, and a little bit wider, and it looked like a regular bathtub. I mean he done such a good job and it was so smooth, and his kids just loved it. He told me they used to soap one end of it, and they'd slide down into the water like otters.

Marian: Think of the splinters you could get!

Joe: When they got enough money so they could replace it with a regular bathtub, the kids wouldn't let them, they liked that bathtub so much. And they just kept it. In fact, I've even got a picture and it was still here when I came to this area, that was in '57. Charlie Hoover out of White City took me up there. He said he wanted me to meet these people, whereas the Great Depression worked a lot of peoples' minds, pinched their souls, made them miserly and maybe a little bit mean, he said, "These people, they just took it in stride and to them it was just another challenge."

FORT WAGNER REMEMBERED

by Jan Wright

Gold discoveries in the Rogue Valley brought an influx of fortune seekers. Creek beds were panned, scraped, dug up, piled up and altered so much that the Native Americans noticed a dramatic reduction in salmon runs.

The miners' solution to starvation and isolation was to encourage seasonal farming during the low water months and bring in supplies with pack trains but the Native Americans had no such network of supplies and depended on gathering food rather than farming. Farmers and skilled workers followed the miners to create small business interests and grow food to fuel the mining companies.

Clashes with the Indians increased with the encroachment of the whites into their territory. It was inevitable when the camas fields were plowed, the salmon and trout streams were redirected for mining and irrigation purposes and when out and out attacks on villages were made, that the Natives would fight back. Settlers built forts to band together for protection from the problems they themselves helped create.

One such fort was located in what is now called Talent. The fort was on the Donation Land Claim of Jacob Wagner, one of the area's first settlers and was named Fort Wagner in his honor. The settlement itself was often referred to as Wagner Creek and wasn't called Talent for many years.

Jacob Wagner first settled in Wagner Creek in 1852. He planted melons, tomatoes and other crops and improved his land with a cabin and some fencing before the 1853 train of covered wagons came into the Rogue Valley. One of those pioneers, Welborn Beeson, recorded in his diary that even as he arrived on Wagner Creek, there was a fort that sheltered his family and others. A number of the emigrants were attacked on their first day in the valley and had no other shelter but their worn out wagons.

Martha and Mary Hill who also wrote about their settlement experiences, remembered the fort as a sturdy log structure enclosing about an acre of land surrounding Jacob's cabin. The women and children who forted up at Ft. Wagner, were

instructed to listen for the alarm and when they heard it, run for the shelter of the cabin in the middle of the fort and let the men protect them within the walls of the fort with their firearms.

Gates were at each end of the "stockade" and shut tight if the Natives were thought to be nearby. A spring bubbled up on the property and was probably within the walls of the fort. People risked venturing out during the day, with their guns close by, but slept inside the fort at night. One can imagine the whispered conversations during the night, the attention to every sound and the strategies the men and women had to end the conflict and get on with their wilderness taming. The threat was very real and took courage. Without the protection of the fort, each family would have to stand alone, isolated in unfamiliar territory; outnumbered and outwitted by those who were trying to hold on to their own way of life.

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The **Historacle** is published quarterly by the
Talent Historical Society

P.O. Box 582 / 206 E. Main Street
Talent Community Center • Talent, Oregon 97540

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Comments & letters may be sent to the Editor, **The Historacle**, by mail or by e-mail casebeer@jeffnet.org. Members of the Society receive **The Historacle** free with membership.

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According to Welborn Beeson, the fort wasn't in every day use even at the war's peak. Once cabins were built, Beesons and other families frequently opted to stay in their own homes rather than in the fort and they certainly felt safe enough to farm and build and hunt as Welborn records in his diaries.

In 1855 when the Indian war flared up again, Beeson records that "every body is forting up but Mr. Robison's and us. We intend to try it tonight, but the neighbors think we shall be killed. I think two or three Indians will die before I do, however there is no telling what will happen." The next day he noted, "We did not get killed nor hurt last night. I guess every body is more scared than hurt."

Though there were closer mills to choose from, on 12th of Oct 1855, just two days after hearing about an Indian uprising in which whites were killed and cabins burned, Welborn went to get wheat from a mill on the Rogue River, "the seat of war." He and 12 other teams caravanned probably to see if they could locate the burned buildings and hear more about the killings first hand. He arrived home the next day unscathed with 26 bushels of wheat.

The war devastated the Indians but pioneer life continued without much interruption. After the treaty to end the war, the fort was not mentioned much again. Jacob Wagner went back east to Iowa to marry. In 1860 when he brought his new wife, Ellen Hendrix, to the Wagner Creek settlement she

did not include the fort in her description of the Wagner home. "There we took possession and set up housekeeping. My husband made all the furniture. It seemed a little queer to me as well as his nephew. Our windows were simply spaces sawed out from the logs and muslin put in."

In 1884 a man visiting the Wagner Creek area

went looking for the remains of the fort. All he could find was the "the mound where the old fire place of Jacob Wagner's hospitable log cabin used to stand." The fort wasn't needed and so the very practical pioneers used the logs for other purposes until it was erased from view. It had served as a place where the settlers could forge unforgettable relationships with one another but was no longer needed.

In the 1970s, the Lions Club encouraged Al Grabher to find the site of Ft. Wagner. His research led him to the site at 226 Talent Avenue. So many changes have

taken place on the old Donation Land Claim that it is hard to even imagine what it once looked like. But the plaque set out will remind us that this is the very spot on which our community was founded.

We can follow the spirit of our town by continuing to gather together for support, community and even protection. The new community center that is slated for the future follows the same sense of tradition that Wagner started so many years ago.



GLEANINGS FROM OLD NEWSPAPERS

OREGON TRAIL PIONEERS SUFFERED PROBLEMS WITH INSURANCE POLICIES

In 1859 pioneers following the overland route to Oregon had to secure special permission from their insurance companies if they wished continued coverage during the time they were in route. New York Life, which insured many such settlers, was one of the first companies to offer protection on the dangerous overland trail. At that time hazards were so great most companies refused to sell policies to people headed west, and their existing policy holders were refused certificates which would have validated their policies for such travel.

The certificates often read like this: "...said policy is free from any and all restrictions on travel and will provide coverage... against the insured's untimely death resulting from such perils of the plains incidental to travel by wagon train, as thirst, starvation, snake bite, buffalo or wild horse stampede, exposure to the elements; or outrages perpetrated by hostile savages as arrow, spear, or gunshot wounds; scalping, burning at the stake or in prairie wagon, or Indian wrestling; as well as death by natural causes." *Note: This article was found in a newspaper clipping scrapbook held by the Douglas County Historical Society. Scrapbook 6891, p. 58.*

HOW THE CALAPOOIA TRIBAL GROUP TAUGHT THEIR CHILDREN

BOOK REVIEW

Apparently, not very many of our early explorers or settlers recorded how the local bands of Native Americans actually taught their children the accepted truths and skills of the social group. This was partly due to the fact that by 1856 nearly all the native groups west of the Cascades had been removed from the area and put on reservations west of McMinnville. So there were very few native Americans in Southern Oregon who were left, and those who were, like the Cow Creeks were in hiding. There were also very few whites whose relationships with any remaining Indian families was solid enough, and friendly enough, for adult Indians to tell them how the children were taught. One such family, however, were the Applegates of Yoncalla, though whose efforts, one family group, the Calapooia sub-group headed by Chief Halo, were protected, were ultimately granted citizenship, and had land allotted to them by the state.

When the family lands were allotted to them, the family took the name of Fern, an English rendition of their name in the Calapooia language. The land allotments have the name as "Fearn," but the family once literate always spelled it "Fern." Here is what Anne Applegate Kruse wrote, using her family archives, in a book called *The Halo Trail*, published by the *Drain Enterprise* in 1954:

"The Callapooias' code of conduct was untiringly taught by the father to the children. It was a custom, religiously enforced, for the father to sit each morning with his children around him, preferably in a circle, and instruct in all that pertained to their conduct. Parental authority was exercised as long as the child was domiciled at the parental tepee. [Ed. note: use of tepee is probably a general statement for western Oregon natives used huts of plank or bark rather than the Plains Indian tepees.] Lying and stealing were particularly detested. Punishment was severe for violation of the rules that were recognized as right. For instance, if theft was committed, the offender was reprimanded severely by the selectmen of the village, and if persisted two men were assigned to the task of execution. One would pinion the guilty one with his arms while the other would send a blade through his heart. Marriage was considered after twelve or fourteen years of age, and the families were generally large."

Future reward was universally believed to be certain to all good Indians, but there seemed some uncertainty as to the fate of the liar or thief."

Anne Kruse followed this statement with this observation:

"It's worthwhile to remember that the Calapooias believed it was necessary to build a character worthy of existence after death. The Great Spirit that ruled had taught them the rules of right and wrong, and made their hearts strong to defend them."

Anne Applegate Kruse's book of 73 pages, can be secured through the public library system in the state. The book is a delightful read. The family of Chief Halo, the local Yoncalla Calapooia headman's initial contact with whites, and several generations of his family and their relationships with the pioneer residents, particularly the extended Applegate family is presented in detail. Here is the bibliographic information needed to secure an interlibrary loan:

Kruse, Anne Applegate. "The Halo Trail: The Story of the Yoncalla Indians." Drain, Oregon: *Drain Enterprise*, 1954.

| THS Membership Levels | | Heritage Societies | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Individual Sponsor | \$20.00 | Eli K. Anderson Society | \$100.00 |
| Family | \$15.00 | John Beeson Society | \$250.00 |
| Family Sponsor | \$30.00 | Jacob Wagner Society | \$400.00 |
| Business Sponsor | \$50.00 | A.P. Talent Society | \$500.00 |
| Lifetime Membership | \$1,000.00 (one-time) | | |

TALENT AREA PIONEER DIARY

Alice Rockfellow Came to Valley with Beeson Wagon Train in 1853

Editorial Note: The following material was taken from material provided by Robin Barron who contributed the extracts of Alice Rockfellow's 1853 diary to Oregon historian and researcher Stephenie Flora. Stephenie is the creator and webmaster of Oregon Territory Pioneers and can be found on the Internet at <http://www.oregonpioneers.com/ortrail.htm>. As noted in the headline, the Rockfellow's came to Oregon with Talent pioneer John Beeson, the man whose family name is recorded locally as Beeson Road. A complete copy of her diary is available at the Southern Oregon History Society in Medford.

William Hurst Rockfellow married Angeline Hendrix in Indiana. They emigrated to the west in 1853 with the Beeson party. The Rockfellow brothers, William, Albert and George are closely associated with Jackson County history. The census for Jackson County in 1854 includes father Henry Rockefeller.

Alice Rockfellow Meachum Foster Ough was the eldest daughter of William and Angeline Rockefeller. Roger Davis of Ventura, a direct descendant of Alice, donated copies of her story to the Southern Oregon Historical Society. A complete copy may be obtained through them. The following is an abstract of that document. Note: missing text is indicated by ellipses...Note: additional explanations are in brackets []

Story of My Life

by Alice Rockefeller Meacham Foster Ough

"In the year of 1853 a congregation of men and women were sitting around William Hearst's farmhouse. They were setting up preliminary plans toward setting out on the long trek across the plains. William had been home from the gold mines of California (he was a 49'er miner) about two years...

There were about 50 wagons, some one-horse, some two and some oxen teams.

It made a fine showing that bright May morning as we started out. Some were laughing and some were crying. It was harder for the women than the men to leave their loved ones. The yard was lined with people with good wishes, both young and old. Many of the men of the neighborhood rode with us to our first camp, and helped to strike the first camp fire. Henry Rockefeller and my father's father travelled two days with us as also did some others.

We had plenty of fun in the evenings up to the time we had to look out for the Indians. We started in early spring and it took us six months on the road. Many of these immigrants were pretty old. They had given up homes that they had lived in all their lives for the sake of making more money, and the trial was great for them. Two years previous to our starting had been terrible times with the Indians massacring the whites. The following year there had been some depredations and we did not just know what our fate would be, so we were on guard all the time. It was proven later that the Mormons were mixed up with us. There was a tenor of fear all of the time; mothers were afraid to let their children out of their sight after leaving the settlement.

We crept along slowly. William's wagons were a light two-horse wagon for his family and a big ox team for provisions, by name Duke and Brandy. We slept in that wagon and I never got up until we were travelling. We had some seamless sacks of soda crackers in this wagon. I remember making breakfast out of these soda crackers, at the same time looking back at my mother and talking. I remember one morning we started very early; we had camped that night without water; the stocks were very dry. We had traveled several miles since starting that morning. All of a sudden an ox whirled out of the team and started to run. They ran quite a distance before they were stopped. Men said they smelled water and we soon came to water...

When night came on and our day's drive was finished, our teams circled around with their wagons placing the wagon's tongue up against the next wagon's and all around, making a circle or enclosure so we had a complete circle. Then every man would attend to his horses and guards would take turns watching; others got wood and water, placed tents, and the horses would eat their fill of the long grass; and then the

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CAMAS—EARLY FOOD FOR OREGONIANS

Early records of the explorers and pioneers who came to Oregon all discuss the camas plant, of the lily family, as a primary food source for the Native Americans. Not only that, but early pioneer recipes show that the bulb was also used to make pies for pioneer families.

The camas was widely distributed in Oregon, although grazing and cultivation has made it less common today. Often in the spring, the blue or white flowers of the camas plant can only be seen between the roadbed and the fences of the adjoining fields, unless the area on the private side of the fence has not been grazed by cattle or sheep.

One of the most complete discussions of how the Indians prepared the camas for consumption is found in Anne Applegate Kruse's book, "The Halo Trail". Here is an excerpt from her 1954 book published by the *Drain Enterprise*, Drain, Oregon.

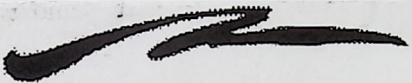
"The wild sunflower and tarweed seeds provided the sapolil (bread) and in the meadows grew the camas whose tall blue flowers made the valleys look like a reflection of the sky in the springtime, and also produced a bulb something like an onion, only having no noticeable odor, that furnished the Indians with a staple foodstuff. They greatly relished cakes made of camas roots and grasshoppers, the latter waxing fat in the tall grass on the hillsides. The squaws dug the camas in the summertime, and it is presumed that they caught the "hoppers."

"They then dug a long trench consistent with the amount of cake to be baked. The trench was then paved with hot rocks which had been heating in a brush fire for some time. On this was placed masses of green grass, leaves and rushes. Then the cakes, properly mixed would be put in and covered with leaves, etc.

Then with piled up earth [covering the trench, the camas] would be left to steam for from six to ten days. The amount to be cooked at a time only varied with the supply on hand, sometimes five bushels of camas, sometimes three hundred.

"When the pit was opened up, the great mass turned brown. When cool enough, it was taken out and molded into cakes and laid in the sun to harden. It was as sweet as yam, and all over the bottom of the trench below the rocks lay a resin-like material, sweet as candy and greatly relished by all members of the tribe. As camas was always plentiful, much of this food was prepared and stored each year as a provision against a shortage of other foodstuffs. These

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men would tie each by his own wagon, but still the men would patrol the country near us. In order to get water some days the drive would be short, others longer but we always stopped when we reached water ...

Up to this time nothing of moment had occurred, but now some of the horses were giving out, not being very well fed and strong when we started. Amongst the first was my mother's sister and family. They were not very well fixed for such a long trip, so they decided to take up a homestead in a new country where they farmed for a good many years. There were also others who stopped with them in different points in that state. We were not molested by Indians on the trip although they would often visit our camps and beg for mulumuc as they called food... They tried to buy my six month old sister... They tried to steal her and we had to watch very close or they would have taken her. They followed us many miles to get her...

[at the crossing of a big river] my father with some others contrived a way to cross. They swam over with the stock and took the wagon beds and caught them up and made boats, and families and everything crossed over that way. We crossed without accident and then it took a good many hours to put everything right again. From that place, I don't remember much in crossing the mountains. In some places the rocky ledges and rough places were so bad that the wagons would be let down with ropes.

Our first stop was in Oregon, in Wagner Creek, in the Rogue Valley, a very beautiful one. There had been a big Indian outbreak here the year before we came. The old fort was still standing at Wagner Creek. This creek takes its name from a man who settled first in this place. Afterwards he married a younger sister of my mother's... [From this point the reminiscence is of life in Oregon, California and Washington. It contains an extremely interesting history of the area. Some of the names mentioned include: Beeson, Stearns, Bingham, Dailey and Meachum.]

DOWNSTREAM CALENDAR

Talent Historical Society Museum,
Talent Community Center.

Museum Open hours:

Mon.—Fri. 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

THS Board Meeting

Talent Library

June 12, 6:00 p.m.

JCHMA Meeting, 2nd Thursday of each month, 10 a.m. – Noon. Location varies.

June 12 July 10 Aug. 14

Sept. 11 Oct. 9 Nov. 13

Chautauqua Program, "The Last Rose"

Talent Community Center

Aug. 9, 10:00 a.m.

Talent Harvest Festival

Sept. 13

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Indians, [Kruse was familiar with Native Americans near Yoncalla, Oregon] contrary to the thriftlessness of certain other natives, not only stored food for themselves, but provided for the improvident, for they said, "some were like the birds, having no thought of the morrow."

Many places in Oregon have been named after this flowering plant, whose blooms dot much of Southern Oregon during the last part of April each year. Camas Valley on the way to Coos Bay, was named because of the massive growth of this plant, and Lookingglass, near Roseburg, was so named because one of the first white men to see the valley, one Hoy Flournoy, saw it in early spring when the entire valley was in bloom, and thinking it looked like a mirror, named the valley Lookingglass.

The camas still blooms, but not in such massive quantities as it once did. Occasionally, a traveler in late April will find a whole field blooming with either dark blue, light blue or white camas blossoms; but that is rare today.

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monuments which lie buried in the windswept sands of the Sahara, mute evidence of the human attempt to save a present moment, to lock in stone their hopes and dreams and aspirations and the world of their gods. In China, ancient bamboo strips, stained with ink or blood itself, are so old that only a dozen of today's most dedicated Chinese scholars can piece together what those age-old Chinese recorded. Scraps of leather, fragments of papyrus, rolls of corroded copper have been pulled from the desert caves along the Jordan River, recording the beliefs of the 2200 year old Essene sect. Beowulf, the oldest piece of British literature that we possess was preserved for today's readers because one copy, and only one copy managed to survive the rain, and wind, and war and flames, that swept back and forth across the British Isles for 1300 or so years. The Greek plays that still draw audiences and are used to teach today's students about the "glory that was Greece" exist only because rain is so rare in Egypt, for most of those play scripts were dug out of 2300 year old landfills, the dumps of Alexander the Great's Greek Egypt—although some of the documents were saved because Egyptian morticians needed filler to stuff crocodile mummies to honor one of the gods of the Nile.

And we, today, who often do not know the names of our great-grandparents, much less their hopes, fears and aspirations, or even something much more simple, the color of their hair or eyes, we use photographs and ink, used only on acid-free paper one might hope, to preserve the swiftly receding past. Those albums, boxes of letters, and chests of photographs or portraits lie hidden away in attics, desks, shelves, bureaus and chests. The pictures of doting mothers, playing infants, awestruck newly wedded couples, proud fathers, and doting grandparents lie there quietly as the inexorable chemicals change. Our fading photographs and fading ink try to preserve our fading past. . . and they are fading fast.

Note: Unfortunately recent negative funding decisions by the county budget committee has made this collective task of preservation by nearly 20 historical organizations in Jackson County much more difficult.

Robert L. Casebeer, Board member

EDITORIAL



FADING PHOTOGRAPHS, FADING MEMORIES

NOTE: For those who do not know, Talent Historical Society received a grant to help us preserve historic pictures of the Talent area and of Talent families. To successfully complete the grant project, we request that members of the Society let us know of those in the community who have such photographs. We have the camera to take copies and then preserve them digitally so they will be available to others. No picture need leave the possession of the family owner, unless they choose to bring them to the Society office to have the photos copied there. We need the assistance of the membership in this regard. Contact us. The phone number and address are on the masthead of this newsletter.

The fog of memory clouds those moments that mark significance—birth, schooling, courtship, marriage, arrival of children, military duty, work, triumph and tragedy, illness and death—as one generation moves relentlessly to the next. Much of what aged primates know dies with them—as true of humans as of monkeys. We humans try to preserve the things that matter to us—objects and memories. I once read of an aged woman packing objects to take to a nursing home, and she included an empty, tinned box. Asked by her daughter why she wanted to take the empty box, the aging mother told her that whenever something precious happened in their family, she, and her now buried husband would, would ritually open the box and imaginatively place the memory of that treasured event inside—no paper, no photograph, just the thought itself! The lady was definitely not going to leave behind her memories when she moved to a nursing home.

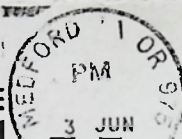
Objects and memories! We humans have always tried to preserve them. Dramatic and forceful pictures of animals and people's red-ochered hands lie deep in French and Spanish caves, created by our ancestors who lived out their lives two Ice Ages ago! Egyptian hieroglyphics decorate the temples and massive

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